

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR ZEV YAROSLAVSKY (REVISED)

November 18, 2014

The Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area was established in 1978 and is the largest urban national park in the United States, encompassing 155,000 acres within the north-western edge of the entire Santa Monica Mountains range that starts in Griffith Park, heads west, and extends under the sea as far as the Channel Islands. It represents a living testament to the value of maintaining and protecting the natural ecosystem of the Santa Monica Mountains, one of the largest significant examples of Mediterranean-type ecosystems in the world.

There is tremendous ecological diversity within the Santa Monica Mountains, home to more than 1,000 plant species, 26 distinct natural communities, 50 endangered species, and critical wildlife habitats that must remain linked in order to survive. Among the species are mountain lions living in the chaparral-covered mountains, where National Park Service biologists have monitored 30 animals since 2002. They report that the biggest threat to lion persistence and survival is the loss and fragmentation of habitat by roads and urban development, since a mountain lion's home range requires a

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minimum of 200 square miles for each animal.

Biologists monitor mountain lion movements to identify wildlife corridor areas that link the Santa Monica Mountains to other large natural areas and allow the lions to roam between them. They report that the long-term survival of the mountain lion population depends on their ability to travel great distances between mountainous regions in order to maintain genetic diversity and population health.

Economic and consumer surveys and reports find that preserving open space such as the Santa Monica Mountains provides tangible quality of life benefits for all residents of greater Los Angeles. In addition, conservation helps support the local economy, drawing thousands of outdoor enthusiasts each week who spent \$26 million in communities near the park in 2013, supporting hundreds of local jobs.

Unfortunately, our region's network of freeways acts as a barrier to maintaining a large and contiguous territory for these mountain lions, whose very survival in the Santa Monica Mountains depends on connectivity and a better system of wildlife crossings. Researchers believe that a safe wildlife ~~crossing~~ passage near the Liberty Canyon exit along the 101 Freeway in Agoura Hills is vital to ~~reduce~~ reducing the impacts of the area's extensive road network, which is degrading the habitat and endangering the local cat population by isolating them from other natural areas.

Fortunately, a growing number of advocates, including the National Park Service, Caltrans, the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority, the Resource Conservation District of the Santa Monica Mountains, the National Wildlife Foundation, Western Alliance for Nature, the Santa Monica Mountains Fund, and the City of Agoura Hills have joined together on a project

to build a wildlife ~~corridor~~ passage across US 101 at Liberty Canyon in order to link protected habitats on either side of the freeway. The passage will provide mountain lions and other wildlife safe passage to find food and mates, and will improve the genetic diversity of both the flora and fauna of the Santa Monica Mountains ecosystem.

NOW, THEREFORE, I MOVE THAT the Board of Supervisors affirm its support for this critically important project to build a wildlife ~~corridor~~ passage on US 101 at Liberty Canyon in Agoura Hills to protect the ongoing health of the Santa Monica Mountains ecosystem, and to preserve this natural heritage for residents of, and visitors to, the County of Los Angeles today and in the future, and I FURTHER MOVE THAT the Chief Executive Office take all appropriate action to formally express that support and advocate for this project's successful completion.

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